

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 761

UNCLAS BOGOTA 2998

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRC, CO(STEWART, JOHN)

SUBJECT: COMPLAINT BY CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF H-B INSTRUMENT
COMPANY

REF: STATE 069696

1. SENATOR SCHWEIKER AND CONGRESSMAN EILBERG INTERESTED.
2. AS REQUESTED REFTTEL, FOLLOWING WAS
DETAILED ACCOUNT OF
VISIT TO EMBASSY BY MR. JOHN STEWART, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
OF H-B INSTRUMENT COMPANY.
3. MR. STEWART ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY ACCOMPANIED BY MR.
HIERGESELL AND WAS MET BY MR. LUIS F. ROCA COMMERCIAL
ASSISTANT IN CHARGE OF AGENT-DISTRIBUTOR SERVICES. AS A
RESULT OF PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE, MR. ROCA HAD PREPARED
AN AGENT/DISTRIBUTOR SERVICE REPORT FOR H.B. INSTRUMENT
COMPANY NAMING SPECIFIC COMPANIES INTERESTED IN MR.
STEWART'S PRODUCTS AND ALSO PROVIDED WORLD TRADE DATA
REPORTS ON THESE COMPANIES THAT WERE AVAILABLE AT THE
EMBASSY. MR. ROCA EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMERCIAL SECTION,
IN LINE WITH INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE, DOES NOT MAKE APPOINTMENTS FOR VISITING US
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES UNTIL THEY ARRIVE AT THE
EMBASSY. THIS POLICY AVOIDS UNNECESSARY EMBARRASSMENT

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ON BEHALF OF THE EMBASSY AND THE U.S. COMPANY IF, FOR
SOME REASON, THE U.S. BUSINESSMAN IS UNABLE TO ARRIVE IN
BOGOTA ON THE DATE STIPULATED. MR. STEWART AGREED THAT
THIS WAS A SOUND POLICY. DURING THE COURSE OF THE
CONVERSATION, MR. STEWART MENTIONED THAT HE HAD VISITED
SEVERAL EMBASSIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND EACH OF THESE
HAD PROVIDED SPACE FOR HIM TO CONDUCT HIS BUSINESS.

MR. ROCA EXPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY WAS PREPARING FOR A TRADE MISSION AND HAD NO AVAILABLE OFFICE SPACE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, SEVERAL OF THE EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTION HAD TO SHARE OFFICES BECAUSE OF SPACE LIMITATIONS. AFTER THIS STATEMENT, MR. STEWART DEMANDED THAT HE BE ALLOWED TO SEE THE COMMERCIAL ATTACHE. THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE AT THAT MOMENT MR. SMITH WAS INVOLVED IN IMPORTANT CONSULTATION WITH THE COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

4. MR. STEWART THEN REQUESTED TO USE THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY FOR HIS BUSINESS INTERVIEWS. MR. ROCA EXPLAINED THAT THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY IS EXTREMELY SMALL AND COULD NOT BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE SINCE IT WOULD DISTURB THOSE PATRONS USING THE LIBRARY. HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THE EMBASSY COULD NOT CLOSE THE LIBRARY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE OFFICE SPACE. MR. STEWART STATED THAT HE SAW NO REASON WHY HE COULD NOT USE MR. ROCA'S OFFICE TO CONDUCT HIS BUSINESS. AT FIRST, HE SUGGESTED THAT MR. ROCA FIND SOMEPLACE ELSE TO WORK DURING THE INTERVIEWS BUT THEN RELENDED AND STATED THAT MR. ROCA MIGHT REMAIN IN HIS OFFICE WHILE THE INTERVIEWS WERE BEING CONDUCTED. MR. ROCA EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE AND INAPPROPRIATE SINCE IT WOULD INTERFERED WITH HIS DUTIES WHICH INCLUDE PROVIDING COMMERCIAL SERVICES TO OTHER BUSINESS VISITORS LIKE MR. STEWART.

5. MR. STEWART ONCE AGAIN REQUESTED TO SPEAK WITH MR. SMITH WHO WAS STILL UNAVAILABLE. HE WAS THEN SEEN BY MR. ORLANDO, THE ASSISTANT COMMERCIAL ATTACHE, WHO UNCLASSIFIED

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RESTATED THE FACT THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE AND STATED THAT HE FELT IT WOULD BE MORE BENEFICIAL FOR MR. STEWART TO MEET HIS PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS IN THEIR OFFICES WHICH IS THE STANDARD PRACTICE OF OTHER US BUSINESS VISITORS WHO WISH TO INTERVIEW PROSPECTIVE AGENTS. MR. STEWART COUNTERED THAT BUSINESS INTERVIEWS IN THE EMBASSY GAVE HIM A PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OVER HIS PROSPECTIVE AGENTS. MR. STEWART STATED, MORE THAN ONCE, IN A FORCEFUL AND IMPOLITE MANNER, THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE EMBASSY COULD NOT PROVIDE THE SERVICES OFFERED BY OTHER U.S. EMBASSIES IN LATIN AMERICA. AT THIS POINT FURTHER EXPLANATIONS ON THE PART OF MR. ORLANDO AND MR. ROCA PROVED USELESS.

6. MR. ORLANDO THEN CONSULTED WITH STEPHEN R. GIBSON, ECONOMIC COUNSELOR, EXPLAINING THE ENTIRE SITUATION TO HIM. MR. GIBSON AGREED THAT THE COMMERCIAL SECTION POLICY SHOULD BE ENFORCED.

7. AFTER THE CONSULTATION, MR. ORLANDO AGAIN EXPLAINED TO MR. STEWART THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF USING EMBASSY OFFICE SPACE TO CONDUCT PRIVATE BUSINESS DUE TO THE COMPLETE UNAVAILABILITY OF SPACE AND THE DISRUPTION OF NORMAL COMMERCIAL WORK SUCH PRIVATE BUSINESS WOULD ENTAIL.

8. AFTER BEING TOLD THIS BY MR. ORLANDO, MR. STEWART THREATENED TO WRITE TO HIS CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES. IT APPEARED HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO USE THIS THREAT AS A FINAL TACTIC IN HIS EFFORTS TO SECURE THE USE OF EMBASSY OFFICE SPACE.

9. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT ABOVE ACCOUNT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. SPECIFICALLY, THE ALLEGATION THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN DONE, IS NOT TRUE (SEE PARA 3. ABOVE), AND AT NO TIME WAS MR. STEWART TREATED IN A UNCLASSIFIED

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"RUDE AND DISCOURTEOUS MANNER" BY ANYONE. ESSENTIALLY THE PROBLEM INVOLVED NOTHING MORE THAN MR. STEWART'S DEMAND THAT HE BE PROVIDED OFFICE SPACE IN THE EMBASSY TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS DURING TWO DAYS WITH PROSPECTIVE AGENTS AND THE EMBASSY'S INABILITY TO COMPLY. SANCHEZ

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